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THE DECENNIAL PUBLICATIONS

A GREEK HAND-MIRROR

A CANTILARUS FROM THE FACTORY OF BRYGOS

BY

FRANK HILLIOW TARBELL

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A GREEK HAND-MIRROR IN THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

ACCOMPANIED BY A HALF-TONE PLATE

AND

A CANTHARUS FROM THE FACTORY OF BRYGOS IN THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

ACCOMPANIED BY TWO HELIOTYPE PLATES

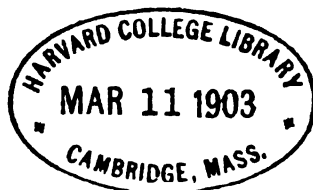
BY

FRANK BIGELOW TARBELL

PROFESSOR OF CLASSICAL ARCHEOLOGY

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A GREEK HAND-MIRROR

A GREEK HAND-MIRROR IN THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

FRANK BIGELOW TARBELL

It is but little more than twenty years since Rayet, in the text to Plate 22 of the *Monuments de l'art antique*, commented upon the strange fact that Greek hand-mirrors, such as are known from Attic vase-paintings and reliefs to have been in common use, had not been found. The lacuna signalized by Rayet has since been filled. Besides the very early hand-mirrors found by Dr. Tsountas at Mycenæ, there now exist in the museums of Athens and other cities not a few such mirrors or parts of mirrors, of Greek manufacture, and dating from ca. 600 B. C. onward. One class has the handle cast in one piece with the disk. In half a dozen known instances the handle is covered with reliefs of early style, while examples with plain handles, from the Argive Heræum and elsewhere, exist in considerable numbers in the National Museum of Athens. Another class, which was certainly in use throughout the fifth century B. C., and probably later, does not have a complete handle of bronze, but a short shank, which is either of one piece with the disk or cast separately, and which evidently fitted into a handle of wood, bone, or ivory, now generally lost. In case the shank is of a separate piece, it is likely to have some ornamental form where it joins the disk, *e. g.*, Ionic or quasi-Ionic volutes with palmettes, as in the examples published in the *Ἐφημερίς Ἀρχαιολογική*, 1884, Plate VI, 4 and 5; a siren, as in one from Cyprus in the British Museum (*Catalogue of Bronzes*, No. 246); an Eros, as in the one published in the *Jahrbuch des archäologischen Instituts*, 1888, p. 246; or a Victory, as in one in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris (*Catalogue des bronzes*, No. 1349).

It is to this class that the mirror represented in Plate I belongs. It was bought in 1890 of Messrs. Rollin et Feuardent, of Paris, by Martin A. Ryerson, Esq., of Chicago, and has been deposited by him in the Art Institute of this city. It is said, on what evidence is unknown, to have been found in Etruria. At all events, it is clearly of Greek, and not Etruscan, manufacture.

The mirror-disk has a diameter of nineteen centimeters. The reflecting surface is very slightly, and at present not quite uniformly, convex. The edge of the disk is ornamented with the "egg" pattern (not visible in the illustration), within which is a fine bead pattern. The back of the disk is plain.

The handle is at present detached from the disk, but the original connection is sufficiently guaranteed by traces upon the latter. At the back the bronze part of the handle is prolonged upward into a palmette, which served to make the attachment to the disk secure. In front the ornamental feature consists of a relief of a siren in

front view, with recurved wings, surrounded by scrolls and palmettes. A strip of bead pattern above the siren's head matches that on the disk. The volutes of the two lower and smaller palmettes turn outward. Those of the two upper were intended to turn inward, but, through an inadvertence of the artist, one of the volutes of the upper palmette on the left is reversed in direction. The entire composition may be compared with that on a standing mirror from Hermione in the Louvre (Reinach, *Répertoire de la statuaire*, Vol. II, p. 702, e), where again a slight asymmetry is observable. Of the two the present specimen has the advantage in the compactness and appearance of solidity of the design.

An especial interest is lent to the Chicago mirror by the fact that the handle proper, into which the shank of the bronze attachment fits, is here preserved. The circumstance is unusual, and, as far as I know, unique, among Greek hand-mirrors of the historical period. As the result of a microscopic examination kindly made by Professor F. R. Lillie, it appears that this handle is of bone, and not of ivory. It is eleven centimeters in length, and is bored through from end to end. The bronze shank, now securely in place, seems to extend about three and one-half centimeters into the tube. In form the handle is not quite cylindrical, but tapers downward, until at the bottom it expands into a sort of collar. It is now much corroded, but the original polished surface is preserved here and there. There is no decoration, except that of incised rings; a group of three at the top, then two, then one, then two, and finally two on the collar.

For determining the date of this mirror there is no evidence except the style of the bronze relief. The workmanship on the face of the siren is not sharp enough to afford a basis of judgment, but the composition as a whole finds its nearest analogies in objects assignable to the fifth century B. C., such as the bronze handles figured in the *Antiquités du Bosphore cimmérien*, Plate XLIV, 3 and 7, and the mirror from Hermione in the Louvre, referred to above. The recurved wings of the siren, contrasted with the more truthful shape of those to be seen, *e. g.*, on the hydria figured by Professor Furtwängler in the *Sammlung Sabouroff*, text to Plate CXLIX, if not decisive, are at least favorable to this dating. So likewise is the character of the palmettes, with their relatively large volutes. Signs of the archaic period, such as may be seen in some of the small bronze sirens of the Athenian Acropolis (Ridder, *Bronzes de l'acropole*, figs. 112-14), being absent, 450 B. C. may be taken as an approximate date.



GREEK HAND-MIRROR

**A CANTHARUS FROM THE FACTORY OF
BRYGOS**

A CANTHARUS FROM THE FACTORY OF BRYGOS IN THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

FRANK BIGELOW TARBELL



THE vase which I am permitted by the authorities of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston to publish was acquired by the Museum in 1895 and is mentioned in the *Report* of the Museum for that year on p. 20, under No. 24, as well as in the *Archäologischer Anzeiger* for 1896, p. 96, under No. 24. According to information believed to be trustworthy, it was found in Bœotia. The drawings reproduced in the head-piece and on Plates II and III are by the skilful hand of Mr. F. Anderson.

The vase is a cantharus,¹ measuring 0.247 meter in height to the top of the handles. It has been broken, but not seriously. Only a few small bits are missing, and the design has suffered no serious loss, except on the head of the female figure. The preliminary sketch, made before the clay was thoroughly hardened, is distinctly

¹The shape resembles closely that of an early black-figured specimen in Berlin, No. 1787 (GERHARD, *Etruskische und campanische Vasenbilder*, Plate XIII, 1-3), and of a red-figured one in the Cabinet des médailles, Paris (photograph by Giraudon, No. 92). Although this form of drinking-cup is represented with great frequency on Attic monuments, chiefly vases, of the sixth century and the early fifth, actual specimens are comparatively rare in the Attic black-figured and early red-figured styles. For this and other reasons it seems likely that the form, like several others used for pottery, was designed for metal, and that the representations in art were often intended to be understood as of metal.

There is another type of cantharus (*Catalogue of Vases*

in the *British Museum*, Vol. III, p. 18, fig. 19), characterised by a bridge extending from each handle to the rim of the bowl and by a spur on the outside of each handle below the bridge. This type seems to occur somewhat more frequently in Attic pottery than the foregoing. It is represented on certain coins (e. g., *British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins*, "Central Greece," Plate VII, 3; Plate XIII, 10, 11, 16; "Thessaly, etc.," Plate XXI, 13, 19, 20; *Coins of the Ancients*, Plate 12, 4), but is almost unknown in vase-paintings. An instance, however, is found on an unpublished white lecythus in Munich.

A third type is exemplified by the cantharus of Epige-nes (*Wiener Vorlegeblätter*, B, IX).

traceable in places. The hair of the woman is done in streaks of alternately lighter and darker brown. Light yellowish brown is used for the lines on the upper part and inside lower part of the woman's chiton, for the minor anatomical markings of the three male figures, for the hair on the front of Zeus's body, for his gaiters, and for the criss-cross markings of the palm tree. Purple is used for the ribbons which confine the woman's and the boy's hair, for the woman's girdle, and for the soles and straps of Zeus's sandals. The black background is of a greenish tinge.

The subjects of the designs demand but little explanation, inasmuch as they offer nothing novel. On the one side (Plate II) a bearded male figure, wearing only a himation and holding a scepter in his left hand, is in hot pursuit of a fleeing woman, who turns toward him with a gesture of appeal. The male figure is almost certainly Zeus. The woman may be intended for *Ægina*, as on a stamnos in the Vatican (*Museo Gregoriano*, II, Plate XX), where the name is attached; but, in view of the number of Zeus's similar adventures, she is best left anonymous.² She wears an Ionic chiton, which she pulls up with her right hand for greater freedom in running. The garment appears as if open on the right side, but this is probably only an error in drawing. Over the chiton the woman wears a himation. Her back hair hangs down, the ends being gathered up into a bunch, tied with a ribbon.³ Behind Zeus is an altar with a palm tree, showing that the scene is conceived as taking place in or near a sacred precinct,⁴ probably of Apollo.

On the other side of the cantharus (Plate III) Zeus is seen again in pursuit. He is dressed as before, except for the addition of sandals and what appear to be gaiters.⁵ The object of his pursuit is this time an immature boy, *Ganymedes*.⁶ The latter wears a himation and, as frequently, carries a hoop and stick.

More interesting than the subjects is the question of authorship. It is obvious that the vase belongs in the early part of the fifth century, and is the work of a man of unusual talent. Nor is it difficult to narrow the determination further. The dots upon all four himatia, the dotted border of Zeus's himation and his obliquely striped scepter in the *Ganymedes* scene, the rendering of the woman's hair in shades of brown, the liberal indication of hair along the median line of Zeus's body, and the

² OVERBECK, *Griech. Kunstmythologie*, Bd. II, pp. 398-402.

³ The same arrangement of the hair occurs on the cylix by Peithinos in Berlin, No. 2279 (*HARTWIG, Meisterschalen*, Plate XXV), on a cylix in Corneto (*ibid.*, Plate LXXV), and on a hydria in the Cabinet des médailles, Paris (photograph by Giraudon, No. 75). Cf. also the archaic *Artemis* from Pompeii (*Römische Mittheilungen*, 1888, p. 282).

⁴ JAHN (*Archäologische Aufsätze*, pp. 149, 150) called attention to the frequency with which an altar is introduced into scenes of abduction. According to him it means that the event is thought of as taking place at a religious festival, and it reflects the fact that on such occasions Greek girls had a liberty of public appearance not usually accorded to them.

⁵ The articles in question are commonly described as

high boots (*irépoúdes*). But in the case before us the footgear proper, to judge by the purple straps, ends just above the ankles. I conceive that the leg-coverings are separate from the footgear. They may perhaps be bandages, wound about the legs and held in place by cords (indicated in black). On the British Museum cylix E. 69, ascribed to Brygos (*Wiener Vorlegeblätter*, VI, 2), the representation is similar, except that there the dabs of brown color, instead of being confined to the legs, appear also between the straps of the sandals, as if the bandages were wound about the feet as well as the legs. On E. 284 in the British Museum the representation seems to agree with that on the Boston cantharus. On E. 276 and E. 361 the black lines are drawn about the legs, but the brown dabs are omitted; and this appears to be a common mode of representation.

⁶ OVERBECK, *Griech. Kunstmythologie*, Bd. II, pp. 515-18.

peculiar arrangement of the hair at the back of Zeus's neck¹ are all in the style of Brygos (if we may for convenience so call the man who decorated the cylices signed with *Bpûγος ἐποίησεν*). And, though each of these features may be found in the work of one or more of his contemporaries, taken collectively they point pretty strongly to him. Again, the triple ends of the hair-ribbons and of the girdle are characteristic of Brygos. But more decisive still are the narrow eyes, sensitive nostrils, and parted lips of the faces, and the headlong impetuosity of movement in the figures. These indications are sufficient to assure us that this vase was not merely produced under the influence of Brygos, but was decorated by his very hand. It is thus one of the most important treasures in the Greek vase collection of the Boston Museum.

¹ Cf. the satyr on the left of the fragment in Castle Ashby (HARTWIG, *Meiserauchen*, Plate XXXIII, 2), attributed to Brygos. Several instances occur also on a cylix in the style of Duris (*ibid.*, Plate LXVI).



DESIGN FROM CANTHARUS IN THE STYLE OF BRYCES



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